

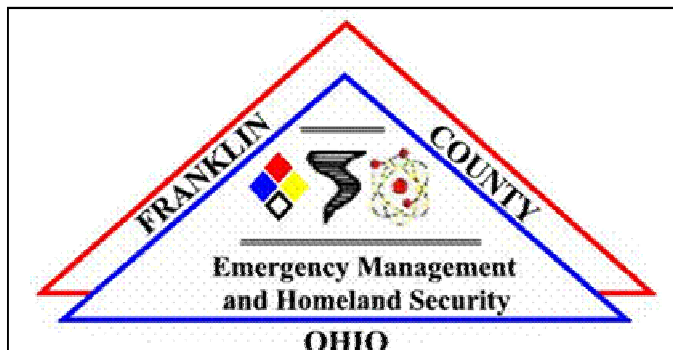
The
February 2007

EMA Report

NEWSLETTER FOR THE FRANKLIN COUNTY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT & HOMELAND SECURITY

VOLUME I, NUMBER 4

Agency Formed Out of Air Raid Defense, Fire, Rescue Volunteers



The Franklin County Emergency Management & Homeland Security Agency (FCEM&HS) coordinates county-wide emergency/disaster planning, education, warning, response and recovery to minimize the adverse impact on area residents and property.

FCEM&HS officially began in 1952 as the Columbus and Franklin County Civil Defense Organization.

By the 1940's large sirens had been installed in the county to call in volunteer firefighters. By 1953, a nationwide organization was formed to promote Civil Defense. Franklin County was among the first in the country to have an effective operating siren system. During this time the Emergency Broadcast System (EBS) was expanded to be used as an additional means to warn citizens. The EBS was made up of designated radio stations in cities to broadcast information concerning potential disasters.

In 1974 officials in Columbus and Franklin County developed and signed an agreement that changed the direction and responsibilities of the agency. The name was also changed to reflect the new image: Columbus and Franklin County Disaster Services Agency (CFCDSA) or DSA for short.

The agency changed and grew in 1987. Attention was placed on hazardous chemical incidents and preparation and training involved in responding to those incidents. The agency began developing county-wide emergency plans for disaster.

These plans helped responding agencies better understand their roles should a major incident or disaster occur. As a direct result, the agency's name was again changed in early 1988 to the Emergency Management Agency for Franklin County (EMAFC).

FCEM&HS was formed and operates under the Ohio Revised Code, Chapter 5502.26.

In 1988, the Franklin County Board of Commissioners and the Chief Executive of all political subdivisions within Franklin County entered into a county-wide agreement to establish and provide funding for the FCEM&HS. *Continued on page 3*



Last year, FEMA unveiled a new national symbol to promote Emergency Management, to help Americans understand how and why it is so important to their lives and to inspire people to become more involved in their own protection and preparedness.

Franklin County Flood Insurance Rate Maps Revised Next Year

A Flood Risk Information Open House was held January 30, 2007 at Memorial Hall for Franklin County residents. The Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) are in the process of being revised.

New updated topography is incorporated into the maps which has resulted in the redelineation of the floodplain boundary in various parts of Franklin County. Representatives from the Ohio Department of Natural Resources and the Federal Emergency Management Agency were available to answer questions.

Further information can be found at www.dnr.state.oh.us/water/ or www.fema.gov/hazard/flood/index.shtm.



Commissioner Marilyn Brown knows that for Franklin County to continue to improve and move forward there has to be strong leadership, a cooperative working environment and a willingness to listen to all residents of the county.

"From emergency preparedness to emergency response, the Franklin County Emergency Management and Homeland Security agency plays an important role in our community," she said. "I am looking forward to working with all of the staff and the rest of the board to ensure the safety and security of our residents."

As Public Affairs Director for the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning, Commissioner Brown worked as part of a diverse leadership team involved in regional planning and economic and community development. She served for seven years as Associate Director for a regional council of suburban governments and school districts created to break down segregated housing patterns in Greater Cleveland's eastern suburbs.

Commissioner Brown holds a Master of Science degree in Organizational Development from Case Western Reserve University Weatherhead School of Management. Her undergraduate work was in psychology and public relations at Ursuline College and Cleveland State University.

Commissioner Brown is married to Eric Brown, a Judge of the Franklin County Common Pleas Court. They have two adult daughters Beryl, husband Andrew; and Daryn. They also have two grandsons, Vincent and Max.

Editor's Note: Each edition we will feature an Executive Committee member and profile their duties and vision for FCEM&HS. Laura Stehle, aide to the Commissioner, is the alternate.



Commissioner Marilyn Brown



Over the last year, Ohio's citizens, teachers and public safety officials have turned to the Ohio Committee for Severe Weather Awareness (OCSWA) website for safety and preparedness information. The new website address is www.weathersafety.ohio.gov to make it easier to remember, according to an Ohio EMA news release.

The OCSWA Web site provides safety tip for tornadoes, floods, thunder and lightning storms, extreme heat, winter storms and home fires. Visitors to the site learn information such as how to write family disaster plans; build preparedness kits for the home and vehicles; and information about Ohio's Spring Severe Weather Awareness Week, Lightning Safety Awareness Week, and Winter Severe Weather Awareness Week. The site contains activities to increase severe weather awareness among school-aged children, including information on the committee's annual Severe

Weather Awareness poster contest.

FCEM&HS Office will be closed Monday, February 19, 2007 in observance of Presidents' Day.
Normal office hours will resume Tuesday, February 20, 2007

Upcoming Meetings

| | | | |
|-------------|----------|---|-----------------------------|
| February 13 | 9-Noon | Franklin County Fire Chiefs Association | 5300 Strawberry Farms Blvd. |
| February 14 | 9-11 AM | Homeland Security Advisory Committee | 5300 Strawberry Farms Blvd. |
| February 14 | 1-2 PM | Messaging Committee, COPIN | 5300 Strawberry Farms Blvd. |
| February 14 | 2-3 PM | Central Ohio Public Information Network | 5300 Strawberry Farms Blvd. |
| February 15 | 1:30-3PM | Animal Shelter Workshop | 5300 Strawberry Farms Blvd. |
| February 22 | 10 AM | Telephone Emergency Notification System | 5300 Strawberry Farms Blvd. |
| February 22 | 2:30 PM | Evacuation Planning Committee | 5300 Strawberry Farms Blvd. |
| February 24 | 8-5 PM | American Red Cross of Greater Columbus | 5300 Strawberry Farms Blvd. |
| March 17 | 9-Noon | Weather Spotters Training | 5300 Strawberry Farms Blvd. |

Upcoming Exercise

| | | | |
|------------|--------|-----------------------------------|--|
| February 8 | 8-5 PM | Regional Pandemic Flu | Knox, Fairfield, Fayette, Licking Counties |
| February 9 | 8-5 PM | Hazardous Material Tech Refresher | Washington Township Fire Department |



Gary L. Holland, Director

Jim Leonard, EM-Recovery/Communications

Art Baker, EM Warning/EOC

Robert Crockett, PIO/Community Education Outreach

www.emafc.com

Donna Monell, Deputy Director

Jan Bartel, Finance

Pam Tickle, Administrative Assistant

Amy Green, EM Planner



Agency History

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In accordance with Ohio Revised Code, Chapter 5502.26, the Advisory Committee also appointed an Executive Committee that oversees the operations and policies of the agency.

FCEM&HS is a 24-hour 7 day a week response agency. The agency reacts to weather watches and warnings, hazardous material spills, aircraft accidents, homeland security issues, health pandemics, and any incident within the county that may require collaborative assistance.

The agency's role during such responses may include: coordinating/locating resources, serving as a liaison between support agencies and the incident commander, coordinating evacuations, or sheltering in place, procuring state and federal funds, maintaining the Franklin County Emergency Operations Center and Emergency Communications Center, and obtaining reimbursement costs for responders to incidents.

FCEM&HS is responsible for installation, maintenance and activation of the outdoor warning siren system.

This system is one of the most extensive systems in the state. The siren system is routinely tested every Wednesday at noon, weather permitting. These tests receive immediate feedback through radio signals of possible problems with the sirens. This information gives us the ability to schedule repairs more quickly and further assures that the system is operational at all times.

The agency also writes, distributes and updates the basic Emergency Operation Plan for Franklin County and each community.

Examples of a few of the plan's components include hazardous materials, weapons of mass destruction (WMD), terrorism, flood, and debris management annexes.

Emphasis is focused on populations-at-risk, e.g., the disabled, non-English or limited English speaking citizens, seniors, low-income and homeless community members.

Editors Note: This is first in a series of articles on FCEM&HS. We hope to impart a better understanding of who we are as emergency management professionals, how we serve the county's 42 villages, municipalities and townships and why our role is important in disaster planning, response and recovery to the general public.



Crystal Springs, OH, April 13, 2005 -- A Crystal Springs resident explains to a FEMA officer how mitigation has saved her home and property after years of flooding in the past. Photo by Lauren Hobart /FEMA News

More homes damaged by floods than any other natural disaster

Flooding is the most common natural disaster in the country. Floods can happen anywhere. But different parts of the country and even different parts of the same neighborhood can be prone to flooding for different reasons. Once you understand the risks, you can better protect your property and your family from damages due to flood loss.

Winter Flooding

Many people think floods only occur in the summer months. Winter flooding causes millions of dollars of damage each year, so it's important

to think about obtaining insurance protection from the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP).

Is your property in a high risk or moderate to low risk area? Knowing your flood profile will help you understand your risk of financial loss [see insurance rate story, page 1].

Flood insurance is offered through the National Flood Insurance Program, which provides federally backed protection against flood losses. To find out more, call the NFIP at 1-800-427-2419 to find a nearby agent, or visit www.FloodSmart.gov.



FEMA/Michael Rieger

Wintery Weather Words



FEMA Photo/Michael Raphael

The National Weather Service (NWS) is responsible for issuing Winter Weather Watches, Warnings, and Advisories to alert the public when dangerous winter conditions are expected. The NWS has more than 20 different winter weather products used to convey different types of weather. The following is a list of some products as well as general definitions of winter meteorological terms:

Freezing Rain

– Rain that freezes upon contact with a cold surface. Freezing rain creates a glaze of ice.

Sleet – Solid grains of ice that from rain that freezes before reaching the ground. These pellets of ice tend to bounce upon contact and may accumulate enough to cover the ground, even to depth of several inches.

Snow – Precipitation of snow crystals, mostly branched in the form of six-pointed stars. It usually falls steadily for several hours or more. Qualifiers, such as occasional or intermittent, are used when a steady, prolonged (for several hours or more) fall is not expected. Its intensity is based on visibility.

Snow Squall – An intense fall of accumulating snow, reducing visibility significantly and often accompanied by increased winds.

Blizzard Warning – issued for sustained or gusty winds of 35 mph or more and falling or blowing snow creating visibilities below one-fourth mile. These conditions usually persist for at least three hours.

Advisories– Highlight weather conditions that are less serious than a warning. Advisories are for events that might cause significant inconvenience, and if caution is not exercised, could lead to situations that may threaten life and/or property. Usually issued 6-18 hours prior to the weather event.

Warnings – A significant/dangerous weather event is imminent. Usually issued 6-18 hours prior to the weather event.

Heavy Snow Warning – issued if the event will be entirely heavy snowfall. *Criteria:* approximately six inches of snow is expected in 12 hours or less across Northern Ohio, and four inches in 12 hours across Central and Southern Ohio; or approximately eight inches or more of snow in 24 hours or less across Northern Ohio and six inches or more of snow in 24 hours across Southern Ohio.

Ice Storm Warning – issued if the event will be entirely ice accrual.

Winter Storm Warning – issued when a combination of heavy snow, heavy freezing rain, heavy sleet or blowing and drifting snow is expected to occur.

Dense Fog Advisory – issued when widespread fog will reduce visibility to one-fourth mile or less.

Freezing Rain Advisory – issued for freezing rain or freezing drizzle: any accumulation up to one-fourth inch.

Snow Advisory – three to five inches in 12 hours or less will trigger an advisory for Northern Ohio, while two to three inches of snow will trigger an advisory in Central and Southern Ohio.

Wind Chill Advisory – issued when wind chill temperatures are expected to be 10 to 24 degrees below zero for an extended period of time.

Winter Weather Advisory – issued for any combination of accumulations of snow, freezing rain, freezing drizzle or sleet that will cause significant inconvenience and moderately dangerous conditions.

Courtesy NWS